



**Kentucky Council on
Postsecondary Education**

Steven L. Beshear
Governor

1024 Capital Center Drive, Suite 320
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Phone: 502-573-1555
Fax: 502-573-1535
<http://www.cpe.ky.gov>

Bradford L. Cowgill
Interim President

TO: Developmental Education Task Force Members
Bradford L. Cowgill, President, CPE
Jon Draud, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education
Helen Mountjoy, Secretary, Education Cabinet

FROM: Dr. James L. Applegate
Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: March 20, 2008

SUBJECT: Developmental Education: Update on Progress

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of you again for the tremendous work you did as members of the Council on Postsecondary Education's Development Education Task Force. Your report is being used around the nation as a model for how a state can take on this difficult issue and set on a course to improve student success. I know how committed we all were to this report not gathering dust on a shelf but making a difference for Kentucky. You laid out a clear set of deliverables and a timeline to help make that happen. The final report can be accessed at this link: http://cpe.ky.gov/committees/develop_ed/.

What follows is an update on our progress. I think you will find the report positive. I will share one sad piece of news. Sherri Noxel, who did such stellar work staffing the task force, has left the Council for a position in Oregon. It is good news for Sherri both because the position is a good one, and she was able to join her husband who had already taken a position there. Oregon's gain was our loss. We have not been able to replace Sherri due to the budget situation. We have continued to push forward. However, I would be dishonest if I did not say this has posed some challenges for us.

Recommendation 1: Update the Admissions Regulation

The task is complete. Public hearings and Council and legislative reviews were conducted according to the timeline, and the new regulations take effect in 2009 as planned. You will recall, these establish common statewide college readiness standards for English, reading, and mathematics; require the postsecondary institutions to implement placement tests for all students falling below the thresholds; and ensure students receive appropriate help in their first term of

enrollment. Regulations also require that these students be enrolled in the appropriate credit bearing courses immediately upon completing their developmental work. All of our institutions are working to redesign their developmental education programs to incorporate innovative uses of summer bridge programs, supplemental instruction, and self paced online programs to more efficiently and effectively move students as quickly as possible to credit bearing courses. If you are interested in reviewing the revised regulation you can find it at <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/013/002/020.htm>.

I also want you to know that we are working on developing common placement tests across the system per your recommendation. A prototype system of mathematics tests is nearly ready for review. We will be convening English and reading faculty soon to work toward the same goal.

Recommendation 2: Develop an Integrated College Readiness and Underprepared Student Accountability/Funding Proposal

The Council included accountability and incentives for postsecondary institutions to increase the retention and graduation of underprepared students in its 2008-10 budget request following your timeline. Also included in that proposal were funds to: (a) reward high schools for increasing the number of prepared students they send to college and (b) match current professional development funds in districts willing to work with postsecondary education to redesign their programs to better target teachers' ability to prepare college-ready students. We had planned to track the impact of those programs and their teacher participants on student success in these districts. To review these proposals see pages seven and eight of the Council's 2008-10 budget request, "Funding our Future" (http://cpe.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D4B5FD0D-103B-4CA0-9022-6A38F0079F9F/0/BudgetrequestFinalsecondrun_reducedsize.pdf). At this point it appears that there will be little or no funding in the 2008-10 budget to support these performance funding programs. However, we are committed to doing what we can in the coming biennium to focus our postsecondary and secondary schools.

Adult basic education has redesigned its accountability and incentive system with a focus on quality and increased college readiness for its students. We also are working closely with ACT and the Kentucky Department of Education to support implementation of the ACT Educational Planning and Assessment System in Kentucky. We are creating partnerships between postsecondary education and middle and high schools to use results as early as eighth grade to design interventions to put all students on track to meet our new college readiness standards. We will use our redesigned High School Feedback Report to track progress.

Although much has been done, much is left to do in this area if we are to truly have the integrated accountability/funding system you envisioned. We must continue to push for an integrated P-20 data system to make full accountability and transparency possible. While we think our funding proposals are a step in the direction of integrated accountability, a chasm still

exists between the funding and incentive systems that drive P-12 and postsecondary education respectively. Your work at least has put us on track to tackle these issues.

Recommendation 3: Fund Infrastructure Improvement

We followed your timeline, and the funding request was made in the 2008-10 Council budget request. Again, however, it appears the current budget will not include additional funds for infrastructure improvement. We are working with the institutions to do our best to use the funds we currently devote to developmental education to redesign our programs to make them more effective and productive. Additional funding would have sped the process but we will do all we can in this biennium with existing funds.

Recommendation 4: Create Professional Development that Targets Readiness

The Council receives \$1 million in federal funds each year to create high quality professional development models involving postsecondary and P-12 partners. We have targeted our funding on development of scalable professional development programs that help teachers use the new ACT/EPAS data to increase college readiness. Kentucky Adult Education, as part of its quality initiative, is reviewing its professional development programs to improve their utility in helping adult educators increase adult learner college readiness. The previous secretary of Education convened stakeholders to discuss the redesign you envisioned. As noted, funding was requested by the Council to match district funds to redirect professional development toward a greater focus on college readiness, though now that funding is extremely unlikely.

While we are on course per your timeline, this is another area where we have a long way to go. You knew we needed to rethink professional development in significant ways to increase its accountability and effectiveness in helping teachers help all students reach college and workforce readiness. This will require a coordinated effort of the KDE, the Education Professional Standards Board, the CPE, the Education Cabinet, and district leadership. Obviously, we are in a political transition right now and enmeshed in the legislative session and budget deliberations. I hope when things settle down a bit we can work with the new Secretary of Education, Helen Mountjoy, to reengage the professional development conversation you called for.

Recommendation 5: Link Teacher Preparation More Strongly to College Readiness

We have partnered with EPSB and reviewed requirements for teacher preparation programs. The current accreditation standards already include language that we can use to highlight a college readiness focus. This spring the Council and EPSB are convening representatives from Kentucky's teacher preparation programs at the public and private institutions and ACT to develop programmatic initiatives that meet those standards and ensure our new teachers know how to use our new college readiness assessments to improve student success. The EPSB will support this effort in subsequent program reviews.

Recommendation 6: Develop Early Interventions for Students

We are still in the process of cataloguing materials from P-12, postsecondary, GEAR UP Kentucky, and Kentucky Adult Education. We are in the midst of completing an inventory of college readiness programs at the state level. An online survey has been sent to district superintendents and principals to gather information about district level programs. Once we have completed the inventory we will assess the programs' effectiveness and begin promoting those programs that seem most effective. In short, we are a bit behind your timeline but hope to pick up steam if we can find our way back to previous staffing levels. We also are working with KDE in planning senior year transition courses targeting students whose junior year ACT scores suggest they are below readiness levels in English, mathematics, and reading. These courses will focus on ensuring that the students achieve readiness by the time they retake their ACT in the senior year.

In summary, your work continues. In most areas, despite loss of staff, political transition, and budget uncertainty, we are on target per your timelines to implement the recommendations. We plan to do a full report on progress to various interim legislative committees in the fall as we approach the 2009 session. We will share those with you as well. Fall 2009 will be a critical point given that it is when the new regulations go into effect. Our most recent cost study shows the postsecondary system spending \$34 million on developmental education. Despite that, as you will recall, our underprepared students drop out at twice the rate of prepared students. These difficult budget times make it even more important that we work to reduce the number of underprepared students coming from high school, and effectively serve adults and younger students who continue to come to us needing additional help to succeed. You have set Kentucky on the right path. We are doing all we can to move down that path with all deliberate speed. The rate of progress, in part, will be determined by the ability of the state to respond to the Council's budget request but we are committed to this task.

Please feel free to contact me if you questions, concerns, or additional thoughts on how we should be effectively addressing this challenge.

JLA:jaw

- c: David Adkisson, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- Hunter R. Boylan, Ph.D., National Center for Developmental Education
- Byron McClenney, Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin
- State Representative Frank Rasche
- State Senator Kenneth W. Winters, Chair, Senate Education Committee
- Audrey Carr
- Faurest Coogle
- Ruth Webb